

VZCZCXRO7417  
OO RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHLH RUEHPW  
DE RUEHCI #0041 0321537  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 011537Z FEB 08  
FM AMCONSUL KOLKATA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1859  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE USD FAS WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 0084  
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME IMMEDIATE 0013  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 2273

UNCLAS KOLKATA 000041

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT PLS PASS HHS AND CDC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [SENV](#) [CASC](#) [AMED](#) [PGOV](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: AI IN W. BENGAL - SITREP 15

REF: KOLKATA 38 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) Summary: On February 1, culling began in three new blocks of West Bengal. Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee announced that the culling target of 2.8 million would be met by February 2. Quarantine guidelines regarding cullers, however, are not being followed uniformly in the districts. Although lapses in culling have been reported, there is no provision for disciplinary action. GOWB health officials report that 210,700 Tamiflu doses have been distributed. End summary.

¶2. (U) As of January 31, the Animal Resources Department marked the following new areas for culling efforts: Suri-1 Block (Birbhum), Ragnathganj Block-2 (Murshidabad), and Chanditala Block-2 (Hooghly). (Note: Blocks are approximately equivalent to municipalities in the U.S. and the GOWB measures deployment of personnel in terms of blocks. Block development officers are often the key point of contact for implementing government decisions. End note.). On January 31, the number of blocks affected by the avian influenza outbreak in West Bengal increased to 47 (from 45 a day earlier). About 2.5 million birds have been culled so far out of a targeted 2.8 million. Chief Minister Bhattacharjee announced that the target will be met by February 2.

¶3. (U) It appears that quarantine guidelines are not followed uniformly. Post contacts reported no quarantine of cullers in Birbhum, but GOWB ARD contacts in the Cooch Behar district reported that 40 cullers have been kept in a large room adjacent to the Block Development Office for the past 48 hours since finishing their culling activities. They will remain quarantined for at least five more days and monitored for signs of illness. All these cullers directly handled dead birds.

¶4. (U) In response to our inquiries about problems with culling and quarantine procedures, GOWB's Director of Health Services S. Bakshi told Post that there is no provision for disciplinary action if cullers fail to do their jobs. Bakshi maintained that over 2.5 million birds have already been culled and that in another day the rest of the target is expected to be met. Bakshi also said that camps for quarantining health workers are running efficiently, and that cullers are being detained for 10 days. According to Bakshi, 2,10,700 Tamiflu doses have been distributed in affected areas for medical, paramedical and other workers. The number of humans tested for infection remains at 18.

JARDINE